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SUBJECT: Goma Report January 8, 2008 - third day of Kivus Conference and military situation update

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1. (SBU) Summary: A prominent Protestant clergyman who is in contact with Nkunda told poloff Nkunda holds to the commitments he made with Special Envoy Tim Shortley but is worried about potential negative effects of the Kivus Conference. The clergyman confirms that Nkunda is willing to send his forces to brassage without requiring they stay in North Kivu, assuming three requirements are met: FDLR is disarmed, CNDP personnel (evidently to include himself) are amnestied and assured of adequate military or political positions, and return of refugees is ensured. Meanwhile, Kivus Conference president Malu Malu says that the first plenary will take place January 9, despite huge obstacles. International community representatives met fifty Mai Mai, who were highly dissatisfied with conference arrangements. End summary.

Runiga's Meeting with Nkunda  
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2. (SBU) On his return January 8 from meeting Nkunda at Kiroilirwe (via MONUC transport), Bishop Jean-Marie Runiga Lugerno gave an account to MONUC (Political Director Christian Manahl and Political Officer Hannah Taylor) and to poloff. President Kabila, acting through his Foreign Affairs Advisor Marcellin Chissambo, had dispatched Runiga to Nkunda, and Kabila had previously sent Runiga to meet Nkunda in September. Runiga said that he had continued to be in telephonic contact with Nkunda "every few days." Runiga is pastor of the Eglise Jesus-Christ le Seul Sauveur (Church of Jesus Christ the only Savior), with churches in several parts of DRC, and national president of the "Association des Eglises de Reveil" (Association of Churches of the Awakening). Nkunda attended his church in Kisangani in past years.

3. (SBU) Runiga said that Nkunda was worried about the Kivus Conference. The CNDP had not been involved in the preparatory meetings for the Conference, nor was it represented in its leadership positions. Runiga said that he pointed out to Nkunda that the presence of Emmanuel Kamanzi and Azil Tanzi, widely considered to be CNDP, in the "Bureau" of the conference certainly gave the conference an appearance of CNDP involvement. Nkunda responded that those two were "representatives of the Tutsi community" only, not CNDP. Nkunda told Runiga that he was satisfied with his delegation of 12 (10 as conference members, one admin, one media handler), whom he had personally designated. The government had sent an invitation to the CNDP, thereby giving the CNDP recognition as a party. (The delegation of 12 is now being transported daily under MONUC escort from Kimoka, north of Sake, to the conference site.) Despite the "complete incoherence of the conference," Nkunda said he would not withdraw this delegation nor cease to abide by the ceasefire which he had called.

¶4. (SBU) Nkunda's deeper worry, according to Runiga, was that the conference could veer off in a negative direction, undermining the work that Special Envoy Tim Shortley had accomplished in mid-December. At that time, Shortley and he had come to agreement on "70 percent of the issues." He had hoped that the conference would be a vehicle to consecrate that 70 percent, but now there was a risk of having to start over. In any case, as the opening session of the conference had now taken place and speeches had been made there that circumscribed the scope of the conference, it was more difficult to see the conference as a vehicle for consecrating the agreement. Nkunda was also concerned that the government had not reciprocated his announcement of a ceasefire. Runiga said that Nkunda did not appear to be aware that the Minister of Defense had announced a ceasefire for the duration of the conference.

¶5. (SBU) Runiga asked Nkunda what his "real claims" were, to which Nkunda cited three. First, the FDLR had to be dealt with. Preferably, its partisans would return to Rwanda. Alternatively, the FDLR would voluntarily disarm and become refugees, to be placed at least 150 kilometers from the border within DRC or in third countries. Alternatively, the FDLR would have to be forcibly disarmed. Nkunda was even amenable to the idea of integrating FDLR into the Congolese army, although he said the government would have to be the one to convince Rwanda and the international community to accept the idea.

¶6. (SBU) Second, CNDP personnel, both military and political, would have to be fully amnestied. Military personnel would have to be given a concomitant military grade and position of responsibility within the Congolese army, and political personnel would have to be given a position of equivalent responsibility in the civilian hierarchy. Nkunda did not mention his own personal status, but Runiga assessed that Nkunda included himself in this requirement. Nkunda himself called for "brassage" of his military forces, saying that he would interpose no conditions (e.g., keeping them in North

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Kivu) on this integration of his forces if his other basic claims were fulfilled. (Runiga noted that, in the meeting he had had a few days previously with Chissambo, the latter had suggested that CNDP political personnel might appropriately be named as directors of public enterprises.)

¶7. (SBU) Nkunda's third requirement was that refugees and displaced persons return to their places of origin. He did not restrict the requirement to Rwandophones. He recognized that if the FDLR and CNDP-status issues were adequately addressed, this issue would, effectively, be resolved. Runiga said that he urged Nkunda not to stress this issue, as it was the province of the government and international community. He urged Nkunda to focus on status of CNDP personnel.

¶8. (SBU) Christian Manahl commented that, while MONUC was itself prohibited at present from direct contact with Nkunda, it firmly supported Shortley's intermediation and also believed Runiga was doing good work. Runiga said that he fully understood the primacy of Shortley's role but stood ready to continue to communicate with Nkunda if such contact were deemed useful.

Quiet on the Military Front  
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¶9. (SBU) MONUC's acting Head of Office Gernot Sauer told poloff January 8 that he was not aware of any confrontations having taken place between FARDC and Nkunda's forces since the beginning of the year. On the other hand, there had been clashes between Pareco and Nkunda January 3 and 4 at Kashuga, northwest of Mweso and Kitchanga, and the MONUC human-rights team was investigating allegations that FARDC (elements of the 2d integrated brigade) had shot into a group of people January 2 at Nkokwe (east of Rumangabo, midway between Goma and Rutshuru), killing ten, apparently on the ground that the group was thought to be giving information to Nkunda's local commander Makenga. Poloff noted that in an earlier conversation, Mai Mai had claimed that Nkunda's forces in recent days had occupied several areas on the periphery of his control, to include Kashuga

and Ngungu (near the South Kivu border). Sauer said that, indeed, it appeared that Nkunda had recently reoccupied Ngungu, which for some time been a "free zone" surrounded by a Mai Mai, FDLR, and Nkunda on various sides. Poloff also called on MONUC North Kivu commander General Narayan, who confirmed that all was quiet between FARDC and Nkunda. He said that there was always "background noise" between Mai Mai groups and Nkunda, and he gave those exchanges little importance.

#### Kivus Conference Limping Along

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¶10. (SBU) There was no plenary meeting of the Kivus conference January 8, even to address rules of procedure. The issuance of badges proceeded slowly, with the issuing office (the Electoral Commission) inundated with applicants and conflicting lists of members. Self-important personages were constantly bullying their way into getting more of their allies accredited. Badges were being sold, according to eye-witness accounts.

¶11. (SBU) In an evening meeting, conference president Malu Malu assured international observers that the plenary would commence on January 9 even if all members of the conference were not yet accredited. (He claimed there were now over 600 accredited, though other reports suggest far fewer; he said that he had ordered simplifications in the accrediting process.) Malu Malu said he had received the CNDP delegation in the course of January 8, assuring them that they would have a serious involvement in the conference, which would however not be a negotiating forum.

¶12. (SBU) EU Special Envoy Roeland van de Geer emphasized to Malu Malu the importance of meeting Mai Mai complaints about poor treatment, to which Malu Malu said that his efforts to placate the Mai Mai had been complicated by their numerous conflicting claims. Manahl raised the issue of public display of weapons in Goma, including by FARDC, as a potential accidental flashpoint, to which Malu Malu -- evidently overcome by a virus and by fatigue -- said that there was not likely much way to handle the issue, though he would raise it with the Minister of Interior. Van de Geer noted the disgruntlement that would mount in the conference because only half the 800 conference members would have the privilege of being allowed in the main hall. Malu Malu said limply said that everyone would somehow have access to discussion via television screen.

Mai Mai

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¶14. (SBU) At opening of day January 8, international observers led by van de Geer, Manahl, and Belgian Special Envoy Jozef Smets met for three hours with fifty representatives of Mai Mai groups present in Goma for the conference. Didier Bitake, spokesman for what was described as the "Groupes Armees Autochtones du Nord Kivu" (Armed Indigenous Groups of North Kivu), gave the principal presentation, while many representatives of the four Mai Mai groups also spoke, some at great length and with great passion. Included were the Mai Mai Kifuafula, the largest group, active in Walikale, northern Masisi, and northernmost South Kivu; Mai Mai Kassindiens, active in the Grand Nord; Pareco, recently formed and active in central Masisi; and "Mongol," a small group only recently resuscitated.

¶15. (SBU) Speakers were incensed at what they considered to be the special treatment afforded Nkunda's forces and their own poor treatment -- no security, no transport, no lodging or food, no payment of the promised per diem. On wider issues, speakers tracked the themes which Hunde and Nianga deputies had sounded with poloff on January 7: Rwanda was the root of conflict in North Kivu, with its support of Nkunda and poor treatment of FDLR returnees. The Mai Mai had arisen as the only true support of the indigenous population, as the army and state apparatus were feckless. They rejected the return of Congolese Tutsi refugees to North Kivu. They opposed any military action against FDLR as past practice showed that the FDLR would wreak vengeance on the local population, but they insisted that the international community ensure FDLR's return to Rwanda. Bitake singled out the United States for special

criticism as Rwanda's and Nkunda's backer, claiming first-hand information on American military supply of Nkunda. Manahl requested that the Mai Mai follow Nkunda's and the Minister of Defense's suit in calling for a ceasefire, to which Bitake said he would consider doing so reluctantly, given Nkunda's recent reoccupation of five villages.

¶16. (SBU) The international observers, with approval of Malu Malu and Chissambo, plan to see leaders of several other dissident and ethnic groups, to include CNDP, in the coming days, on the margins of the conference, depending on its pace.

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